We need to come up with one winner from each of the following categories:

Pre-K thru 2nd Grade

3rd thru 5th Grade

6th thru 8th Grade

Since the names of the winners have to go downtown by December 9th, I suggest that we hold a school-wide competition on **Wednesday December 7th**

**Students need to memorize and perform poems about ‘the Black experience throughout the Diaspora’.**

**Beware!** When a poem has been performed many, many times in the Theodore Gibson Oratorical Competition, the judges ‘retire’ it. **Don’t have your kids learn any of the poems in the list below.** If they do, they won’t be allowed to perform their poems in inter-school competition.

"Mother to Son" by: Langston Hughes

"Negro Mother" by: Langston Hughes

“Freedom Train” by: Langston Hughes

“Dreams” by: Langston Hughes

“The Reason I Like Chocolate” by: Nikki Giovanni

"The Creation" by: James Weldon Johnson

"Justice in America" by: Gigi Watson

"Honey, I Can be Whatever I Want to Be" by: Gigi Watson

“Last Will and Testament” by: Mary McLeod Bethune

“Little Soul Sister” by: Useni Eugene Perkins

“Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.” by: Lucille H. GiIles & Useni Eugene Perkins

"Honey, I Love" by: Eloise Greenfield

“Way Down in the Music” by: Eloise Greenfield

“Harriet Tubman" by: Eloise Greenfield

"I Have a Dream" by: Martin Luther King

“Phenomenal Woman” by: Maya Angelou

“Midway” by: Naomi Long Madgett

“Essence 25" by: Kephra Burns

“Still I Rise” by Maya Angelou

“Daddy’s Little Girl” by Linda Michelle Baron

“Equality” by Maya Angelou

“Ain’t that Bad?” by Maya Angelou

“Ego Trip” by Nikki Giovanni

“To the Forlorn Black Child of the 21st Century” by Aimée Pringle

"Fire” by Langston Hughes “Just Like Job” by Maya Angelou

"My Poem” by Nikki Giovanni “Lord,

"Why Did You Make Me Black” by RuNett Nia Ebo

"I am Somebody” by Gigi Watson “We Real Cool” by Gwendolyn Brooks

“I Too” by Langston Hughes

"Ain't I A Woman" by Sojourner Truth

"Life Is Fine" by Langston Hughes

“Booker T. and WEB” by: Dudley Randall

“We Wear the Mask” by: Paul Laurence Dunbar

“I Have a Dream” by: Dr. Martin Luther King

“To Be Young Gifted and Black” by:Weldon Irving

“I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” by: Maya Angelou

“Equality” by: Maya Angelou

“Alone” by: Maya Angelou

“I, Too sing America” by: Langston Hughes

“Still, I Rise” by Maya Angelou

“Dreams” by: Langston Hughes

So what poems can they perform? Whatever poems you like! I’d suggest choosing novel, reasonably long poems that will impress the judges in inter-school competition. I’ve been going through some poetry books from the public library and here are a few ***suggestions*.** **Please send me your own favorites and I’ll append them to this list.**

**……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………**

**Time to Play**

**By Nikki Grimes**

**Mama says to play outside.**

**Wish I had a bike to ride.**

**I'll fly to the moon instead.**

**Steer the rocket in my head.**

**I'll pretend to find a star**

**No one has seen so far.**

**Then I'll name it after me -**

**Africa Lawanda Lee!**

**But for now I'll grab some chalk,**

**Play hopscotch out on the walk.**

**………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….**

**Right for Secrets, Left for Love**

**Walter Dean Myers**

**Mommy tucks me safe in bed**

**And then turns off the light**

**Then I listen for I know**

**How she will end my night**

**She will whisper ever soft**

**Sweet words for tiny ears**

**Right for secrets, left for love**

**And hugs to ease my fears**

**In the morning when I wake**

**The whispers come again**

**Right for secrets, left for love**

**That’s how my day begins**

**……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………**

**Don’t Mess With Grandmama and Me**

**Walter Dean Myers**

**Way down yonder where the tall grass grows**

**Lives a seven-foot frog with pointy toes**

**He jumps and he bumps and he swims in the sea**

**But he’d better not mess**

**With Grandmama and me**

**Grandmama will turn him inside out**

**She’ll make him squeal**

**and she’ll make him shout**

**He’ll say Oochy ouch**

**and say Oo-wee**

**And be sorry he messed with Grandmama and me**

**Around the corner in a crooked old house**

**Lives a red-eyed rat and a nine-tailed mouse**

**They jump on people and they go Hee-heee**

**But they’d better not mess**

**with Grandmama and me**

**Grandmama will turn them inside out**

**She’ll make them squeal**

**and she’ll make them shout**

**Make them say Oochy ouch**

**and say Oo-wee**

**And be sorry they messed**

**with Grandmama and me**

**Down in the cellar underneath the stairs**

**There are nineteen monsters and fourteen bears**

**They grab everything that they can see**

**But they’d better not mess**

**with Grandmama and me**

**Grandmama will turn them inside out**

**She’ll make them squeal**

**and she’ll make them shout**

**Make them say Oochy ouch**

**and say Oo-wee**

**And be sorry they messed**

**with Grandmama and me**

**Over in the bushes in the middle of the park**

**There’s a creepy leepy thing that lives in the dark**

**It makes scary noises and it stings like a bee**

**But it better not mess**

**with Grandmama and me**

**Grandmama will turn it inside out**

**She’ll make it squeal**

**and she’ll make it shout**

**Make it say Oochy ouch**

**and say Oo-wee**

**And be sorry it messed**

**with Grandmama and me**

**…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………**

**Your World**

**Georgia Douglas Johnson**

**Your world is as big as you make it**

**I know, for I used to abide**

**In the narrowest nest in a corner**

**My wings pressing close to my side**

**But I sighted the distant horizon**

**Where the sky-line encircled the sea**

**And I throbbed with a burning desire**

**To travel this immensity**

**I battered the cordons around me**

**And cradled my wings on the breeze**

**Then soared to the uttermost reaches**

**With rapture, with power, with ease!**

**……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………**

**Women**

**Alice Walker**

**They were women then**

**My mama's generation**

**Husky of voice--stout of**

**Step**

**With fists as well as**

**Hands**

**How they battered down**

**Doors**

**And ironed**

**Starched white**

**Shirts**

**How they led**

**Armies**

**Headragged generals**

**Across mined**

**Fields**

**Booby-trapped**

**Ditches**

**To discover books**

**Desks**

**A place for us**

**How they knew what we**

**Must know**

**Without knowing a page**

**Of it**

**Themselves.**

**………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..**

**Aunt Sue’s Stories**

**Langston Hughes**

**Aunt Sue has a head full of stories.**

**Aunt Sue has a whole heart full of stories.**

**Summer nights on the front porch**

**Aunt Sue cuddles a brown-faced child to her bosom**

**And tells him stories.**

**Black slaves**

**Working in the hot sun,**

**And black slaves**

**Walking in the dewy night,**

**And black slaves**

**Singing sorrow songs on the banks of a mighty river**

**Mingle themselves softly**

**In the flow of old Aunt Sue's voice,**

**Mingle themselves softly**

**In the dark shadows that cross and recross**

**Aunt Sue's stories.**

**And the dark-faced child, listening,**

**Knows that Aunt Sue's stories are real stories.**

**He knows that Aunt Sue never got her stories**

**Out of any book at all,**

**But that they came**

**Right out of her own life.**

**The dark-faced child is quiet**

**Of a summer night**

**Listening to Aunt Sue's stories.**

**……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….**

**Human Family**

**Maya Angelou**

**I note the obvious differences**

**in the human family.**

**Some of us are serious,**

**some thrive on comedy.**

**Some declare their lives are lived**

**as true profundity,**

**and others claim they really live**

**the real reality.**

**The variety of our skin tones**

**can confuse, bemuse, delight,**

**brown and pink and beige and purple,**

**tan and blue and white.**

**I’ve sailed upon the seven seas**

**and stopped in every land,**

**I’ve seen the wonders of the world,**

**not yet one common man.**

**I know ten thousand women**

**called Jane and Mary Jane,**

**but I’ve not seen any two**

**who really were the same.**

**Mirror twins are different**

**although their features jibe,**

**and lovers think quite different thoughts**

**while lying side by side. We love and lose in China,**

**we weep on England’s moors,**

**and laugh and moan in Guinea,**

**and thrive on Spanish shores.**

**We seek success in Finland,**

**are born and die in Maine.**

**In minor ways we differ,**

**in major we’re the same.**

**I note the obvious differences**

**between each sort and type,**

**but we are more alike, my friends,**

**than we are unalike.**

**We are more alike, my friends,**

**than we are unalike.**

**We are more alike, my friends,**

**than we are unalike**

**……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….**

**All Eyez on U**

**(for 2Pac Shakur 1971-1996)**

**Nikki Giovanni**

**as I tossed and turned unable to achieve sleep unable to control**

**anxiety unable to comprehend why**

**2Pac is not with us**

**if those who lived by the sword died by the sword there would be no**

**white men on earth**

**if those who lived on hatred died on hatred there would be no KKK**

**if those who lived by lies died by lies there would be nobody on wall**

**street in executive suites in academic offices instructing the young**

**don't tell me he got what he deserved he deserved a chariot and**

**the accolades of a grateful people**

**he deserved his life**

**it is as clear as a mountain stream as defining as a lightning strike**

**as terrifying as sun to vampires**

**2Pac told the truth**

**there were those who called it dirty gansta rap inciting there were**

**those who never wanted to be angry at the conditions but angry**

**at the messenger who report: your kitchen has roaches your toilet**

**is overflowing your basement has so much water the rats are in the**

**living room**

**your house is in disorder**

**and 2Pac told you about it**

**what a beautiful boy graceful carriage melodic voice sharp wit intellectual**

**breadth what a beautiful boy to lose**

**not me never me I do not believe east coast west coast I saw**

**them murder Emmett Till I saw them murder Malcolm X I saw**

**them murder Martin Luther King I witnessed them shooting**

**Rap Brown I saw them beat LeRoi Jones I saw them fill their jails**

**I see them burning churches not me never me I do not believe**

**this is some sort of mouth action this is some sort of political**

**action and they picked well they picked the brightest freshest**

**fruit from the tallest tree what a beautiful boy**

**but he will not go away as Malcolm did not go away as Emmett**

**Till did not go away your shooting him will not take him from us**

**his spirit will fill our hearts his courage will strengthen us for the**

**challenge his truth will straighten our backbones**

**you know, Socrates had a mother she too watched her son drink**

**hemlock she too asked why but Socrates stood firm and would**

**not lie to save himself 2Pac has a mother the lovely Afeni had**

**to bury her son it is not right**

**it is not right this young warrior is cut down it is not right for**

**the old to bury the young it is not right**

**this generation mourns 2Pac as my generation mourned Till as we**

**all mourn Malcolm this wonderful young warrior**

**Sonia Sanchez said when she learned of his passing she walked all day**

**walking the beautiful warrior home to our ancestors I just cried as all**

**mothers cry for the beautiful boy who said he and Mike Tyson would**

**never be allowed to be free at the same time who told the truth about**

**them and who told the truth about us who is our beautiful warrior**

**there are those who wanted to make him the problem who wanted**

**to believe if they silenced 2Pac all would be quiet on the ghetto**

**front there are those who testified that the problem wasn't the conditions**

**but the people talking about them**

**they took away band so the boys started scratching they took away**

**gym so the boys started break dancing the boys started rapping**

**cause they gave them the guns and the drugs but not the schools and**

**libraries**

**what a beautiful boy to lose**

**and we mourn 2Pac Shakur and we reach out to his mother and we**

**hug ourselves in sadness and shame**

**and we are compelled to ask:**

**R U Happy, Mz Tucker? 2Pac is gone**

**R U Happy?**

**……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….**